Rediscovery of Religious Poetry

—Horace Gregory

THE

Commonweal

The Indian's Dilemma

by George H. Dunne

When Communists Fall Out

by Gunnar D. Kumlien

Community of Suffering

by Claire Huchet Bishop

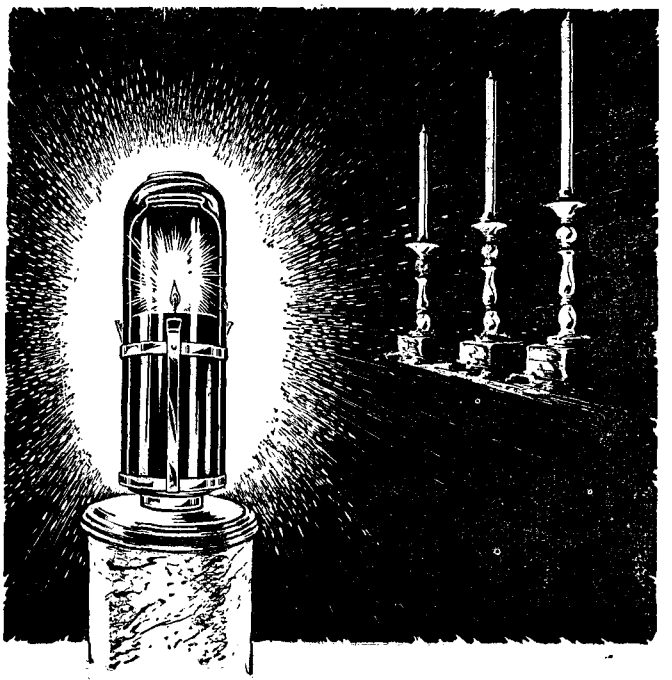
Thomas F. Curley Frank Getlein

Michael Harrington William Dunlea Dachine Rainer

olume LXV, No. 14 January 4, 1957 Twenty Cents

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Like the Star Which Guided the Magi...



...the Sanctuary Light bids all to kneel before the feet of God

Never extinguished, except on Good Friday when the Eucharist is removed from the altar, the Sanctuary Light bids all who approach the Tabernacle to kneel in recognition of the veiled Presence there.

Representing on earth, the seven heavenly lamps of the Apocalypse, this symbolical light deserves the finest in materials and workmanship. That's why Will & Baumer compounds and manufactures sanctuary lights with especial care. Our Lux Domini Sanctolite, a rubrical light conforming with Canon 1271, is stable, will not deteriorate, smoke or smudge. Its cleanliness, convenience and economy all recommend it. Fits any standard sanctuary lamp.

Will & Baumer
CANDLE CO., INC.
PURVEYORS TO THE VATICAN BY APPOINTMENT
SYRACUSE BOSTON NEW YORK CHICAGO
MONTREAL LOS ANGELES

IN OUR SECOND CENTURY OF FINE CANDLE MAKING

THIS WEEK

Week by Week 347

The Indian's Dilemma
by George H. Dunne 351

When Communists Fall Out
by Gunnar D. Kumlien 355

Just a Gesture
by John Cogley 357

Community of Suffering
by Claire Huchet Bishop 358

The Screen
by Philip T. Hartung 360

Rediscovery of Religious Poetry
by Horace Gregory 361

Books 363

THE COMMONWEAL
386 FOURTH AVENUE
NEW YORK 16

Editor
EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editors
JAMES FINN
PHILIP SCHARPER

Contributing Editors
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

Entered as second-class matter at the post office at Orange, Conn., under the act of March 3, 1879. Published weekly, printed and copyrighted 1956 in the U. S. A. by the Commonweal Publishing Co., Inc., 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y., MUrray Hill 3-9685

U. S. and Canada, $8 a year. Foreign, $10. Single copies 20¢

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-THIRD YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

THE USES OF OPINION

THERE IS something paradoxical about the relationship between public opinion and totalitarianism. Skillful propaganda is invariably a pre-requisite of the dictator's rise to power—be he Lenin, Mussolini, Hitler, Mao, Tito or Colonel Nasser. Once the dictator and his regime are firmly in the saddle, however, public opinion is flouted whenever exigencies of state or personal ambition appear to demand it. Yet even as they fling down the gauntlet to their own people, or to other nations, the tyrants of our day do their utmost to justify the most heinous actions.

The most cogent-sounding reasons are adduced for arrests, dispersals, expropriations and all sorts of internal suppressions. Official statements on these matters are invariably couched in highly moralistic terms (as the State now acts as indoctrinator and keeper of the public conscience). With channels of communication firmly in hand and opportunities for expressing opposition suppressed, such governments do succeed in deceiving many. It is the same when aggression expands beyond national borders. These moves are accompanied by similarly moralistic official statements emphatic in self-justification. And in this way, in their own shameful way, the totalitarians show an unfailing respect for the forces of public opinion at home and abroad.

It is well to keep this relationship in mind as applied to recent happenings. The British and French knew that their descent upon Suez would arouse widespread indignation. They were probably taken aback, however, by its strength (and the threatening gestures of the Soviet Union). The USSR has continued its bloody repression of the Hungarian people despite widespread condemnation outside the Iron Curtain, East and West, plus a sweeping and formal censure on the part of the Assembly of the United Nations.

Yet even today's Soviet Union, with its barely penetrable Iron Curtain, is not impervious to the opinions of mankind. When revulsion is intense, as it understandably is at present, all sorts of areas critical for the Soviet cause are affected. They take in a wide range of the political spectrum. Determined adherents of democratic and human liberties in every land are strengthened in their wholehearted opposition to Communism. The isolationists and politically indifferent are awakened from their lethargy. Many doubts of the neutralists are resolved for them so that they turn in large numbers toward the anti-Communist camp.

WITHIN the world's Communist Parties themselves the results are even more cataclysmic. In democratic countries defections among fellow-travelers are manifold; sincere and anguished individual members tear up their Party cards, deserting the ranks; fragmentation sets in. The spirit of revolt flames brighter among the satellites. Within the Soviet Union itself the elite which has had to be developed to direct the various components of a mammoth industrial complex is too intelligent and informed not to grow increasingly restive. Opposition among the top government leadership builds up strength. For Russia's Politburo, the only compensating factor in the Hungarian situation is the evidence that no satellite can break clear of the Russian stranglehold through its own strength, no matter to what lengths its people are willing to go in order to get free.

The immediate effect of the widespread indignation toward the Soviet Union is hardly visible. It may, through neutralist mediation, lead to certain mild concessions in Budapest. But the main result is the way the unbelievable and continuing resist-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ance of the Hungarians has slowed down the steady Communist advance through the world. The Russians are experiencing serious engine trouble at home, while the roads leading out of the strategic Kremlin heartland have been pitted with craters.

Clearly the focus for the varying degrees of indignation of the peoples of the world is the United Nations. Without the armed strength to enforce its decisions against major powers, especially those with the size and might of Communist China, Soviet Russia or the United States—and with action by its Security Council hamstrung by the ever-present possibility of a veto by one of its five permanent members—the UN is still able to exert considerable force in the world. Now eighty nations strong, it serves as the world's principal advocate of universal security, justice and peace at the government level. The fact that its decisions are accepted by the smaller, the unaggressive and the peace-loving nations represents a substantial achievement in itself. But the concerted opinion the UN is able to marshal is thus far its most potent weapon against any force bent on domination of the world.

THE ROAD TO DESEGREGATION

SEVERAL unrelated events across the country emphasize what we all know, that the road to desegregation in the schools is a rough one. Yet we are, as a nation, making our painful, halting way toward the goal we have in sight. When the Supreme Court passed its ruling in May, 1954, it said that the goal of integration in the schools should be achieved "with all deliberate speed." Some individuals and organizations continue to speak in direct opposition to the ruling, but most people who do not welcome integration, when put to the test, bow to the ruling. In actual practice the significant question becomes, "how fast is 'deliberate speed'?"

In Dallas, Texas, for instance, the school board has stated that it is striving to comply with the ruling of the Supreme Court. But, evidently questioning the delay in integration, nineteen Negro children brought suit to gain admission to white schools. The federal district judge, William H. Atwell, recently dismissed the suit, saying that Negro and white students could not attend the white schools "at the present time," and he cited several real difficulties that exist.

The clear implication that integration in Dallas schools will be feasible in the future may be cold comfort for many, but it marks an advance in the Judge's public thinking. For the Judge, even now, objects to the grounds of the Supreme Court's decision, and when the Negro students first filed suit in September, 1955, he quickly ruled that Dallas need not integrate. But time and pressure have modified the public views of this 86-year-old man. He, too, moves down the rough, untraveled road to full integration.

More encouraging, and courageous, is the stand of Dr. Harmon W. Caldwell, the chancellor of Georgia's sixteen state colleges and universities. While he stated that "we do wish, so far as possible, to preserve segregation in our institutions," he also said that he would recommend Negroes for admission to white institutions if they were qualified.

This may seem to be a minimal statement, the least that the circumstances demand. But for Dr. Caldwell personally, the situation is not simple. An appropriation act of Georgia provides that state funds will be cut off from any unit of the university system that abandons segregation. This does not, as Dr. Caldwell pointed out, prohibit the admission of Negroes, but it does "spell out the consequences." And Dr. Caldwell also pointed out, convincingly enough, that the mere statement of his own position may cost him his job.

The country must have decisions like these, repeated over and over, before we will glimpse the goal of complete integration. But we should recognize, and applaud, even as we push beyond them, those whose personal sacrifices make the attainment of the goal more possible.

CATHOLICS IN PUBLIC OFFICE

AT THE last Democratic convention, Senator John Kennedy of Massachusetts, a Catholic, came within an inch of winning the Democratic nomination for the Vice Presidency. This in turn set off a flurry of discussions about Catholics in public office. Many Catholics learned then for the first time how strongly some Protestants still feel on the subject. A good example of the depth of this feeling is provided by a recent article in the *Christian Century*, called "Catholics in Public Office" and written by Dr. Roy Pearson, dean of Andover Newton Theological School in Massachusetts.

"In a great many minds," Dr. Pearson says, "there is an uncomfortable uneasiness about the establishment of Roman Catholics in the high places of government." He would clearly include himself as one of them, and he says so quite frankly.

At first—or even second—reading, Dr. Pearson's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

article is likely only to anger Catholics. This is due, we think, as much to the way in which he phrases things as to what he actually says, since other Protestants have made the same points he raises. But Dr. Pearson seems to have a gift for wording his statements as offensively as possible. He says, for example: "Too many people have been disturbed by that church's lack of sensitivity about the importance of keeping public funds out of ecclesiastical pockets. . . ."—a choice of phrase somehow suggesting that Catholic bishops are personally profiting from the public treasury. Like some of his Catholic counterparts, Dr. Pearson tends to see his opinion on prudential questions as the *only* view; thus he does not simply oppose "public support for parochial schools" (busses? lunches? or what?) but sweepingly dismisses the whole subject as "another raid on the legislature." The Pope on occasion is not Pius XII or even the head of the Roman Catholic Church; he is "a foreign potentate [!] commanding unqualified obedience."

Perhaps Dr. Pearson saw such phrases as being somehow "journalistic"; perhaps he included them solely to pep up his article. But in fact their use strikes the reader as deliberately provocative, and this is too bad, because Protestants and Catholics both could profit from more thought on the whole question of religion and politics.

If we read the article rightly, we can tell Dr. Pearson immediately that there are some things he wants from Catholics that they cannot give. These demands stem from the fact that Dr. Pearson is a Protestant, not a Catholic, and that in effect he sometimes seems to be asking Catholics to be Protestants, not Catholics. In citing questions that might be put to candidates, for example, he says: "What evidence has a candidate given that his primary loyalty is directly to God and not to an ecclesiastical hierarchy which claims to speak for God?" Actually, this is a non-existent dilemma. But as Dr. Pearson seems to mean the question, it is simply another way of asking a man if he is a Protestant. Catholics do believe that Christ established a Church and that this Church is what is known as the Roman Catholic Church; they do believe that there is a divinely established priesthood, that Christ empowered His Apostles and their successors, the bishops, to teach in His Name. This belief constitutes one of the great differences between most Protestants and Catholics. Unless we are attaching too much importance to Dr. Pearson's use of the word "directly," he should realize that he is really asking American Catholics to deny the teaching authority of the Church on doctrinal questions and moral issues. This they cannot do. And it should be obvious that to ask them to do so as the price of participation in political life is itself a distortion of the American idea, for it would mean that only a Protestant can be a real American. This point of view, we think, is truly un-American.

Nonetheless, we think Catholics would do well not to discuss Dr. Pearson's article solely on these terms and stop there. Whatever his bias and despite the fact that much of his article is only a lament that Catholics are not Protestants, his statements do provide an index to the reality and intensity of Protestant fears about Catholics and Church-State relationships. Catholics may pooh-pooh these fears, but they are genuine, and by no means limited to nativist bigots.

Dr. Pearson writes: "When the pope speaks *ex cathedra* on matters of faith and morals, Roman Catholics are required to believe that he is infallible. Does the voter wish his political leaders to build their official policies on such a foundation?" Here we do not think it is enough for Catholics simply to repeat that Protestants actually have nothing to fear, that faith and morals are one thing and prudential political decisions are something else again, or that Catholic legislators do not vote as a bloc. We would say the same thing, but we also think it is essential that not even a hint of such a thing as a "Catholic line" on matters that are not faith and morals should ever be found in the statements of Catholic groups or in the Catholic press. Granted, for example, that there are good arguments for them, matters involving political prudence, like free lunches in parochial schools or the desirability of having a U.S. ambassador at the Vatican, should never be treated in the Catholic press as if there were no room for disagreement among Catholics —unless we want non-Catholics to think there is in fact a Catholic "party line" on political questions.

Above all, we think Catholics should be careful to demonstrate a livelier respect for democratic processes on small as well as large questions. What this involves often is a simple sense of proportion—a willingness to forego winning a small victory at the price of seeming to "force" a point through over all opposition. The bishops of the United States may issue statements affirming Catholic loyalty to the Constitution—as they have—but this will not affect non-Catholics nearly as much as the conduct of Catholics on local problems involving school boards, say, or public libraries. A belligerent approach by Catholics may squeeze a certain book out of the library, or intimidate a theater owner into showing only Class A movies. But when there is a marked

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

lack of proportion between the goal that is being sought and the means used to reach it, non-Catholics understandably tend to classify all Catholics as absolutists who have no respect for the opinions of others and little regard for the normal give-and-take of democratic life. And if non-Catholics think this on relatively small issues, it is hardly surprising that many of them assume the same attitude would be manifested on larger decisions.

In these perennial discussions of Church-State relationships there are obviously a certain number of people whose minds are completely closed. Not much can be done about them. But Catholics and non-Catholics who are willing to engage in serious self-examination and reasonable discussion about the whole problem might well produce some valuable guides for the future. Dr. Pearson's article does not strike us as such a guide. But if it leads to serious thought on both sides, the article will have performed a real service.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

NOT VERY long ago an Egyptian colonel, a Yugoslav Communist and an Indian Socialist attracted world-wide attention when they met to discuss their common interests. Now, after the Suez debacle, Nasser is asserting his will even against that of the UN; Tito, as Mr. Kumlien's article in this present issue reaffirms, is having severe internal trouble; and Prime Minister Nehru has paid a successful visit to President Eisenhower and the entire country. The trio's interests are no longer so common. Only Mr. Nehru can now speak to the world.

The questions of colonialism and neutralism have tended to keep the United States and India at a distance even when they seemed to have goals in common. Although the United States formed itself only after a revolution, it has tended to act in accord with its NATO allies; and the Indians are painfully sensitive to their history of colonialism under Western power. But granting this, the Indians have listened too sympathetically, Americans believe, to the Russian outcries against colonialism. Because of this, their neutralism, it is said, has a strong pro-Russian bias.

There is too much truth in both positions for the differences to dissolve themselves completely in the warmth of any single conference. But Mr. Nehru's recent attitude and statements are encouraging. Although India was remarkably slow to take a stand on Hungary, it seems to have learned a much-needed lesson: Russia is a colonial power harsher than the one the Indians had known. And our stand on Egypt taught another lesson: the United States can stand apart from its allies on serious issues affecting the peace of the world. Mr. Nehru's talks and press conference reveal that these recent events have had their impact on his thinking.

The full results of Mr. Nehru's visit will only gradually become apparent. At the very least, however, the United States and India should now find it easier to recognize their common objectives and work in concert for them.

HUNGARY AND IMMIGRATION

MANY PEOPLE like to hang onto something they like until it is completely useless, a thing of shreds and patches. Maybe this is a part of human nature; at least it is understandable. But when the thing wasn't much good in the first place, and when it never really served its purpose, such attachment seems like mere perversity. Yet that's the kind of attachment our country seems to show toward the Walter-McCarran Immigration Act.

If there were lingering doubts in anyone's mind about the value of the Walter-McCarran Act, the tragedy of Hungary should have dissipated them. For the Act has proved to be nothing but an unnecessary obstacle, something to hobble those who were moving to freedom as well as those who sincerely tried to help. The Act is still there. It is a thing of shreds and patches. It was never good. But, unfortunately, it is ours and we seem to want to hang onto it. Or can we hope that this year Congress will do what past Congresses have failed to?

GOVERNOR HERTER

THE APPOINTMENT of Governor Christian A. Herter as Under Secretary of State to succeed Herbert Hoover Jr. is good news. Mr. Herter has wide experience in the field of foreign affairs. He headed the House committee which won wide support for the vital work of the Marshall Plan, and the respect with which he is regarded in Congress should make his work easier. President Eisenhower is going to need all the support he can get in the next four years; despite all the talk of "modern Republicanism," when the chips are down effective Eisenhower Republicans are hard to find. Governor Herter will be a welcome addition to the ranks of those in Washington who are speaking with a new GOP accent.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Indian's Dilemma

"HE MOVES IN A CULTURAL VACUUM LIKE A LOST SOUL, CONDEMNED TO WANDER FOREVER, AT ODDS WITH THE UNIVERSE"

GEORGE H. DUNNE

FROM TIME TO TIME what is known as the "Indian problem" escapes from the prosaic and cloudy obscurity of statistical figures, government reports, sociological analyses and impinges itself upon public consciousness with tragic and dramatic clarity in an incident like the death of Ira B. Hayes. One of the immortals of Mount Suribachi, he survived the terrors of blood-bathed Iwo Jima to die on a black night in January, 1955, alone beneath the stars and desolate, on the cold desert near Phoenix, Arizona, a victim, the coroner said, of alcohol and exposure. A victim, more penetrating observers say, of the unresolved Indian problem.

After his return from war, Hayes could not find any life for himself on the reservation, any cultural pattern with which to integrate himself. There was nothing there to make life meaningful. On the other hand, he was totally unprepared to face life off the reservation. The record shows that Hayes made repeated efforts to integrate himself with the white man's off-the-reservation world and, alternately, as many efforts to discover on the reservation some form of living that had meaning. He who helped conquer Iwo Jima could not conquer frustration. Defeated, he lay down in the desert sands to die.

This is the real Indian problem which is, at the same time, a dilemma: on the one hand, the reservation does not offer a form of life with which the Indian can integrate and thus find himself; on the other hand, the Indian is almost totally unprepared to integrate himself with life off the reservation.

This is what created the problem: the white man destroyed Indian culture and failed to supply a substitute. As a result, the Indian moves in a cultural vacuum like a lost soul, condemned to wander forever in a meaningless void, at odds with the universe. Rare individuals manage to triumph over the insuperable odds which confront them; but for most it is a situation which leads to frustration and despair. It is, in point of fact, leading to the destruction of Indians on a grand scale.

Father George H. Dunne, S.J., is a well-known contributor to The Commonweal.

What brought the Indians to this pass? All the muddled, often contradictory, policies which have characterized the government's handling of the Indian problem over the years. First, we effectively destroyed the American Indian's way of life. Next, we isolated him on lonely reservations, making it impossible for him to integrate himself with the white man's way of life. Then, through the General Allotment Act of 1887, we authorized the division of tribal lands into individual parcels which, after a twenty-five year period of government trusteeship, were patented in fee simple and made alienable. The Indian was, of course, totally unprepared for this step which by 1933 had led to the passing to white ownership of 91,000,000 of the 138,000,000 acres of land held by Indians in 1887. So, in 1933 we reversed our policy. Through the policies incorporated in the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 we reinforced the reservation system, re-established the principle of tribal ownership and sovereignty, discouraged talk of integration, and then, with a paternal smile, told the Indian he was now free to seek his own destiny. Having zagged in that direction until 1952 we are now, under the present Administration, once more zigging in the opposite direction. The talk now is of withdrawal and of termination.

It is small wonder that the Indian is bewildered. Seek his own destiny where? Within the framework of his own culture which has been destroyed beyond possibility of revival? Within the framework of the paleface's culture which is not ready to accept him and which he is not prepared to accept?

THE INDIANS once had a culture which, although primitive in character, enabled them to establish satisfactory relationships with their neighbor, with the world around them, and with the supernatural elements which, however erroneously they conceived them, they knew to be a part of the universe in which they lived. In their tribal, family, and social relations they had developed certain cultural values which enabled them satisfactorily to come to terms with their environment. The white man destroyed that environment

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and in the process destroyed the Indian culture related to it.

Twenty-seven years ago I heard an Indian chief describe with somber eloquence the gradual destruction of his people's culture. He was of the Coeur d'Alene tribe in Idaho. He was replying to the Catholic Bishop who had just scolded the assembled members of the tribe for their failure to appreciate all that the white man's government was doing for them. His face stern as though carved in granite, his voice rich as the tones of a violincello, the chief recited the hundred years of infamous history during which extermination alternated with exploitation as a substitute for policy. With magnificent imagery he described the free way of life which had been destroyed by the white man and his government. In the end he affirmed that the only thing of value he and his people had received from the white man was faith in the one true God, a gift brought by the Blackrobe. Now even this gift, he concluded bitterly, was being stolen out of the hearts of young Indians under the influence of the cheap bars, cheap movie houses, cheap dance halls in the white man's towns on the fringes of the reservation. When the chief had finished the Bishop cleared his throat—and went home.

The other alternative proposed to the Indian, that he work out his destiny within the framework of the white man's culture, is not without its irony. Integration presupposes a readiness on the part of whites to receive the Indian into their cities, neighborhoods, schools, churches, shops, factories, laboratories. This is the key to the problem. Indians feel that whites do not want them. So again we find racial arrogance, the white man's idolatrous and degrading worship of the whiteness of his own skin, at the root of another one of our pressing national problems.

On the other hand, the Indians are not themselves prepared to find a way of life within the framework of the predominant culture of the white man. A great gulf separates the ancient ways of the Indian from our culture. Some Indians have bridged that gulf, chiefly those who have had a great deal of education. But they are relatively few. It is almost impossible for the average Indian to understand the white man's attitude towards the state, society, family, taxes, property, capital, labor, work and its motivations, money, religion and other essential elements of our culture. At the moment, for example, the most popular religion on the San Carlos Apache Reservation, despite long established Catholic and Lutheran missions both boasting *numerically* respectable memberships, is composed of a strange and sad mixture of Catholic, Protestant and medicine man practices and beliefs. This is symbolic of the confusion in the midst of which the Indian lives as a result of the breakdown of his own culture and our failure to give him a satisfactory substitute.

THE SOLUTIONS proposed for the problem vary according as their proponents are more impressed by one or the other horn of the Indian's dilemma. Some urge a policy of withdrawal in two directions. Let the government leave the Indians strictly alone. Let the Indians, having nothing to do with the white man's government or society, turn back to their own cultural milieu and find fulfillment in the preservation of their own primitive religious values, economic order and social organization.

But for most tribes their way of life is destroyed beyond possibility of revival. It is not a question of whether they might prefer the world of yesterday to that of today. Whether it is more delightful to shoot a buffalo or to drive a tractor is for them an academic question. The buffalo are gone. If the Indians had not sold Manhattan Island to the Dutch; if the Dutch had not been followed by the English and the English by their rebellious colonists, the Americans; if millions of white men, lured by the promise of a new world, had not left their homes across the sea; if electricity had not been discovered nor the steam and combustion engines invented; if the march of history could have been halted 200 years ago, the state of the question would be quite different. But these, and thousands of other pertinent events, did happen. These facts and the conditions of living that have resulted from them constitute the real world with which we and the Indians must cope and within which we and they must live.

It may be possible for a small tribe such as the Hopi, which has succeeded in maintaining a kind of splendid isolation from the surrounding world down through the years, to live within its past. It is not possible for the larger tribes, many of whose cultural values were to begin with less durable, to isolate themselves. Even had their own culture not been destroyed, stark economic facts would prevent isolation. The reservations are simply incapable of supporting all the members of the tribe. A Stanford research study shows, for example, that with full development of reservation resources the San Carlos Apache Reservation in Arizona would still be unable adequately to support all members of the tribe.

Another approach to the problem is that of Oliver La Farge, long time friend of the Indians and president of the Association on American Indian Affairs. Apparently chiefly concerned with the preservation of tribal entity, he opposes any weakening of tribal sovereignty and holds in anathema any policy which appears to him to lead in the direction of government withdrawal or termination of the reservation system. All Indians recognize La Farge's proven friendship, but not all agree with him. They say the reservation is chiefly responsible for destroying the Indian as an individual. The reservation system is one of paternalism which makes the individual utterly dependent upon the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bureau of Indian Affairs and upon the tribal council. As they function under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, the reservations constitute islands of state socialism in a society organized around the principle of free enterprise. The Indian owns nothing. The tribe owns everything. The habits and attitudes almost inevitably engendered by the very nature of the reservation system unfit the Indian for survival in our highly competitive society, in which, for better or for worse, the virtues of initiative, self-reliance, energy and thrift are of paramount importance.

Those Indian leaders knew what they were doing who, like Crazy Horse, Sioux conqueror of Custer, long resisted bitterly every effort, whether of blandishment, threat or force, to persuade them to bring their people into the shadows of the forts and surrender them to the paternal care of the government. Before white treachery and cruelty drove the Sioux into rebellion, Crazy Horse, as a boy, had witnessed the corrosive effects upon Indian character of this mode of life. In the end he was forced by the sufferings of his harried and starving people to yield. Before he sank, an Indian Caesar, beneath the bloody knives of grinning jackals of treachery, he had already learned to regret his decision. For in the encampments assigned them outside the army posts where Indians sat in idleness waiting government hand-outs of food, clothing, tobacco, he watched the disintegration of character rapidly setting in. Crazy Horse was glad to die. Better death than decay.

IF THE RESERVATION system is itself responsible for the evils which are destroying the Indian, the answer to the problem would seem obvious: abolish the reservation system. There are some who advocate such a course, among them those who would like to get their hands on mineral and land resources belonging to the tribes.

The problem is not so easily resolved. Indians, generally speaking, have over the years become so dependent upon the Indian agencies, so unaccustomed to rely upon themselves, that they cannot conceive of any other form of survival. Any suggestion of doing away with the paternalistic system fills them with terror. For much the same reason they oppose desperately any measure which seems to them to threaten tribal entity. With so much of his own culture destroyed, the Indian feels secure only to the extent that he can identify himself with his tribe. This is why he supports tribal ownership of land and all the other features of tribal sovereignty.

This is the attitude of probably the majority of Indians. They can hardly be blamed. With the buffalo gone from the plains, with hunger gnawing at their vitals, with the icy fingers of winter rattling their bones, the followers of Crazy Horse could not be blamed for begging him to give up. Surrender to paternalism had become the only means of survival. Now, however, it becomes increasingly evident that paternalism is only a more subtle form of death. It preserves the body, but destroys the soul.

An increasing number of enlightened Indian leaders realize this. They are aware that the attitude of the majority must be changed and this now deeply ingrained dependence broken down if the Indian is to solve his problem. These men are devoted to ancestral traditions and tribal ties. But they want Indians who are free to own their own homes, till their own soil on or off the reservation; and also free to move into American cities and enter fully into the business, labor, professional and intellectual life of these communities.

Clearly this aim implies the end of the reservation system as presently constituted. The reservations must go. But they must not go until the Indians have been adequately prepared. The abandonment of paternalism must be a gradual process and must be carried out in such a way that the many legal and moral obligations which the government has incurred, and so often violated, are scrupulously fulfilled. It is wrong to condemn out of hand every governmental policy which leads towards withdrawal, but it is right to scrutinize closely every such policy. It must be clear that the policy is not inspired by the desire to shirk responsibilities, but rather by the resolve to carry them out fully and in a way that best serves the American Indian.

IF THERE is any one key to the problem, it is education. White communities must be educated to welcome Indians as neighbors. The Indian must be educated to the inevitability and desirability of integration. There can be no question of forcing integration upon him. He must be free to choose his own path. But persuasive efforts must be made to convince him that the present path of reservation paternalism leads but to the grave.

This educational task will not be easy. Who can blame the Indian who wants nothing to do with the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

paleface's culture? He has vivid memories of limitless wrongs. The scars are still livid. Can the Apache, whose people never practiced scalping, forget the bounties on Apache scalps collected by white men? Or the Sioux forget the unspeakable desecration of the bodies of their murdered wives and daughters? It will not be easy, with these memories still living, to persuade the Indian to merge with the white man's society; but, especially with the younger generation, it will not be impossible. This educational task will best be achieved by Indian leaders themselves.

Most important of all, the younger generations must be given an education that will equip them to enter fully into the mainstream of American life. They must be educated to understand and to cope with the problems of living engendered by a society organized around the principles of political freedom, socially regulated freedom of enterprise, private property, individual initiative.

This will be the most difficult task. The difficulty does not lie in any deficiency of intelligence on the part of the Indians, but in determining what kind of education is needed. Vocational schools may equip Indians to repair automobiles, build radio sets, drive tractors. But what kind of curricula and what sort of pedagogy is required to equip the Indian to understand and to evaluate the operative principles of the dominant culture which surrounds him and to enable him to weave into the fabric of his own psychology the positive values of that culture? What type of education will enable him, while preserving whatever of positive value remains of his Indian heritage, to become an integral part of American society?

What of the reservations themselves? What should ultimately be done with them? It should be kept in mind that they belong to the Indians. More exactly, they belong to the Indian tribes. Most Indians feel that the tribal land base must be maintained, else the tribes will disappear as entities. Even those who feel that the preservation of tribal entity is less important than the preservation of the individual from decay would be slow to advocate division of the land. Indians on the whole are scarcely more prepared to assume this responsibility today than they were at the time of the Allotment Act of 1887.

A proposal that is winning constantly stronger support is that each reservation, with all of its property holdings, be incorporated, each member of the tribe becoming a shareholder. One of the most earnest advocates of this plan is Thomas Shiya. He is not himself an Indian, but he served for several years as manager of the San Carlos Apache tribal enterprises, and from this vantage point he acquired first-hand knowledge of the Indian problem. In a recent speech, Mr. Shiya described this plan:

"Let's visualize, then, a corporation, owned by Indian stockholders who elect their board of directors, who will hire qualified management to operate the corporation for the profit of the Indian. Whether the Indian continues to live on the land or moves anywhere else to live, he continues to hold his share of the corporation stock and receives his share of dividends.

"The corporation will act as any land-holding corporation in America. Its responsibilities on the land are economic. The other public responsibilities such as education, law and order, health, welfare, etc., will be delegated to government agencies already serving the rest of the people in the country, state and nation. . . .

"To continue federal responsibilities but to free Indians from federal bureaucracy, the corporation will be responsible to three or more private citizens as trustees. These trustees, successful and experienced leaders of unimpeachable character . . . . would oversee management in the operation of corporation affairs on behalf of the Indian stockholder. . . ."

In his speech Mr. Shiya outlined other details of this plan which he terms one of "trust management" and which he believes would "open the way to all the incentives, rewards and goals that make America the leading economic nation of the world. The Indian as an individual, rather than the tribe, becomes important and foremost, the family can own its own home on its own land, public school education can be put to use on Indian land, and, above all, Indian land becomes integrated with the nation's economy—an asset rather than a liability."

There are many others who also believe that in this direction alone lies hope for the Indian. They admit freely that such a transformation of the reservations will involve casualties; but they argue that almost any solution of the problem would cause fewer casualties than does the reservation system itself. It is hoped that with such a transformation there will be fewer tragedies like that of Ira B. Hayes and more Indians equipped to come to terms with the world in which they live. The advocates of this trust management idea fully realize that such a transformation will require long preparation. First must come the educational project and its implementation. This will take time. Yet, in the opinion of serious observers, there is no time to lose.

OLD CHRISTMAS CARDS

A Long Island reader calls attention to a request he recently received from a priest in a Brazilian seminary. According to a custom of his country, Father Teodardo wants to distribute "Holy Pictures (used Christmas cards)" on the occasion of his golden jubilee in the priesthood—which occurs on March 10, 1957. The address is: Rev. Frei Teodardo, Colégio Serafico, Taguari, Rio Grande de Sul, Brazil.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

When Communists Fall Out

GUNNAR D. KUMLIEN

NOT EVEN Tito's break with Moscow or the reconciliation seven years later has caused a more radical change in Yugoslavia than have the recent events in nearby Hungary. Only a few days before the Hungarian uprising, Belgrade was like a Communist Mecca, where Marxist pilgrims journeyed from the East as well as from the West in order to seek light. The Hungarian uprising changed all that almost overnight. It was as if Yugoslavia had suddenly been bypassed or as if it had somehow been emptied of its political substance. There was a great silence in Belgrade.

It was finally broken by a Communist veteran, Milovan Djilas. Once one of Tito's closest collaborators, he had been in disgrace for some years although not in jail and was therefore nicknamed "the one-man opposition." He was the man who, after the break with Moscow, wanted to make Yugoslavia a democratic country in the Western sense of the word. After the uprisings in Budapest, he said that what had happened in Hungary was the beginning of the end of Communism; this time he was promptly clapped into jail.

Yugoslav diplomats and journalists in Budapest during the fighting could almost feel, hour by hour, how the attitude towards them changed from friendliness at the beginning to hostility in the end, even after Imre Nagy asked for asylum in the Yugoslav Embassy. At the beginning of the uprising, Yugoslavia appeared as an encouraging example to the Hungarians: at the end as an attempt to save Communism under a camouflage of moderation. It is significant that during the fighting only a few hundred Hungarians fled to Yugoslav territory, practically all of them Communists and some of them armed. They all returned later.

The arrest of Djilas was not the only indication that Tito had seen the sign on the wall. Other steps were taken, too, and it became a widely heard joke in Belgrade that the liberalization of Communism which Tito wanted applied only to the other people's democracies, but not to Yugoslavia. As a matter of fact, a polemic arose again between Tito and Moscow, partly because Tito had given the Russian leaders so much advice on how to run their country that the Russians resented it. Even many Yugoslav Communists found their reaction understandable. Tito blamed Stalinism for the explosion in Hungary and said that the whole Russian system was responsible for the cult of the individual to which Stalinism had led. From Russia came the reply that the bad example of National Communism was responsible for events in Hungary and that Tito, living in a conspicuous glass house, had better not talk about the cult of the individual.

This exchange kindled in its turn the old discussion among Yugoslav Communists about which way is right, Stalinism or Titoism, and many of them were not at all convinced that Titoism or national Communism is the right way. I had long discussions with some of them about Hungary and Poland and many of them said: "We realize now perfectly well that what is advancing under the cover of de-Stalinization is nothing but anti-Communism. When the Hungarian Communists fled to Yugoslavia, we asked them why they did not fight instead. They replied: 'It was impossible—we had the whole population against us.' We retorted: 'We haven't. We took our steps in time.' And they: 'We thought so too, until it happened.' "

WHO IS right? Some Yugoslav Communists now say it was wrong to throw mud at Stalin. It would have been quite sufficient to leave him in the shadow, they maintain, until history provided the necessary perspective to make the due distinctions between his mistakes and his greatness; for he was great even in his negative aspects and the dwarfs who have succeeded him will never be able to destroy him. As things are now, they finally say, there is a great danger that everything will crumble.

And there is a lot of talk in the Communist countries about the return of Molotov as the "supercontroller" of all the Russian ministries and of Michael Suslov as the youngest and the most promising in the group of three representing Stalinism: Molotov, Suslov and Kaganovitch. The new name which the Stalinists are calling Titoists of all grades and shades is "the termites." According to the Stalinists, the national Communists are like termites, eating away the strength of Communism, without ever appearing at the surface.

The strange thing is that this expression, which has had such rapid success in the Communist world, was not born in the East, but in the West—in France to be exact. Among all the Communist parties in the West the

Mr. Kumlien, The Commonweal's regular correspondent in Rome, recently visited Yugoslavia.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

French appears more and more as the most Stalinist, particularly after Hungary; at the same time the Italian Communist party takes a different stand and appears as the most Titoist. Such is the prestige of the West within the Eastern bloc that the Stalinists all over the Communist world use in their propaganda what the French Communists say and express it with French precision and logic. It somehow has more weight coming from the West, all the more so as most non-Communists in the Communist countries cannot understand how a normal human being can be a Communist of his own free choice.

An Oriental diplomat whom I met in Belgrade expressed in an earthy way what he felt about the Communist situation after Hungary. "National Communism," he said, is like a woman who refuses to have a child but wants to be 'pregnant up to a certain point' and remain so." "It is obviously impossible," he went on. "Either she is not pregnant, and that is Stalinism, or she is pregnant and will bring forth a child, whether she wants it or not." This Oriental simile had great success in Belgrade, where it was said that in Hungary the birth was premature, that Poland is entering the ninth month and that in Yugoslavia Tito is scared to such a point that he is planning abortion, although it is too late. And what is it National Communism in its different forms is carrying? There was no hesitation in Belgrade about the reply: Capitalism. Hungary had showed that clearly enough.

Therefore the situation is pretty confusing for most Communists. Stalinism seems to be impossible in the long run and all other forms of Communism seem to be unable to stop the landslide back to Capitalism. On the other hand, if national Communism intends to remain Communist it has to become static like Stalinism and finally use the same methods. There is no way out. I heard Yugoslav Communists say that in the old days Communists could be divided on the question of the means to be used, but never on the question of the ultimate aim which Communism sought. Now they are divided about both the means and the aim. "We are ideologically disarmed," said one of them, "particularly in the eyes of the younger generations."

THERE IS no doubt that the whole Balkan region is boiling now like a witch's cauldron. And it has been brought to boil not only by the new divisions between Stalinists and national Communists, but by the old (and innumerable) nationalistic oppositions between the different minorities which traditonally made of the Balkans the unruly corner of Europe where so many wars originated. It was not by chance that the most serious uprising so far happened in Hungary, the Balkan country which, since the last war, has lost most territory and minorities to its neighbors. If Albania, Czechoslovakia and Eastern Germany are Stalinist strongholds, it is partly because there are Albanian minorities in Yugoslavia, because Czechoslovakia is afraid of Western Germany to a point that reconstruction in the ex-German territories in that country is lagging hopelessly behind, and because the relations between Communist East Germany and Communist Poland are very strained because of the Oder-Neisse line which divides them. It is more difficult for Soviet Russia to keep the lid on the Balkan cauldron.

Therefore it is said among Yugoslav Communists —and they know what they are talking about—that the Red Army is following an increasingly independent line. It is less and less concerned with ideologies and has as little sympathy for Titoism as for Stalinism. But like all military careerists, its representatives like discipline and are sensitive about national prestige. If, during Stalin's lifetime, they showed clearly enough that they did not like him, they now prefer Stalinism to Titoism for the simple reason that Stalinism seems to be more apt to keep up discipline. When the Russians struck the second time in Budapest, some Hungarian Communists tried to make the Red Army seem responsible for the brutality of the aggression, and they made a clear distinction between the Russian Communist party and the Red Army. The Red Army defended itself against these accusations by arguing that it had to act, as the political leaders seemed unable to agree on anything, in Budapest as well as in Moscow. The Hungarian uprising would otherwise have led straight to a third world war, according to the Russian military leaders, who therefore now consider themselves as the saviors of world peace.

The inner crisis of Communism is nowhere more obvious now than in Yugoslavia, precisely because in Yugoslavia the Communist Party was from the beginning more grassroot in its strength than in any other Russian satellite. For this reason, Djilas' words ring like those of a funeral oration: "The experience of Yugoslavia appears to testify that national Communism is incapable of transcending the boundaries of Communism as such . . . [it] seems to indicate that national Communism can merely break from Moscow . . . and construct essentially the identical Communist system. The revolution in Hungary means the beginning of the end of Communism generally."

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

JUST A GESTURE

MILTON MAYER, whose witty offbeat prose has appeared in these pages, is having a low-key wrangle with the government. Mayer is a pacifist who does not want any of his modest tax payments used for military purposes. "I gladly accept my obligations to maintain free and peaceful institutions," he has said; but "as a conscientious objector and a patriot" he is not willing to give anything that might contribute to the "militarization of my country and, through its militarization, to the ruin which has overtaken every democracy which has ever taken the course." Mayer, therefore, held back fifty per cent of his 1952 income tax payment.

To show his good will he contributed an equal sum to the Fellowship of Reconciliation and the American Friends Service Committee, two organizations "which in the government's own view are serving our country's free and peaceful institutions." The fifty per cent estimate of his share of military expenditures is conservative, Mayer says, and based on the government's own reports.

The government applied $66.60 which was due Mayer for an earlier overpayment to his 1952 taxes and attached his income to collect the $32.78 more due, plus interest.

Now Milton Mayer is trying to get his $99.38 back. He bases his argument on the First Amendment, arguing that the seizure of that princely sum was a violation of his conscientious objection to war. He is also urging the Treasury to set up a non-military fund so that people like him can pay their taxes cheerfully.

I know Milton Mayer is not foolishly concerned with the ultimate fate of every greenback that passes through his hands. He is not like the lady who asked that her tax money be used to pay a year's salary for that nice Mr. Nixon.

What Mayer is asking for is a symbol. He wants the government to say: "Milton is one of our boys, a bit screwy perhaps but one of ours nonetheless. Well, we don't agree with his ideas but we think he has a right to hold them, so we are setting aside this special piggy bank for him. It's crazy. But it's Mayer's way of saying he does not like what we are up to, and we think he ought to be able to say this crazy thing in his own crazy way."

Of course the government does not talk that way. What the government has actually said is that it can not segregate tax monies. It can not decide whose money goes where.

The government has a case, and a good one. If Mayer gets his special pacifist account at the Treasury there is nothing to stop the vegetarians from insisting that their money should not be used to pay the cost of meat inspection. The Christian Scientists might require assurances that their dollars are not supporting the public health service's vaccine programs. Catholics might demand proof that their money does not support divorce courts, atheists that theirs is not applied to pay the salaries of military chaplains.

If the isolationist demanded that not one cent of his hard-earned money go to foreign aid, and the Southern segregationist let it be known that he was not going to let one of his dollars support the FEPC, life in Washington would be even more difficult than it is right now.

But such considerations are not likely to impress Milton Mayer.

Victor Moore, that benign comedian, used to have a skit that he played all over the United States. It began with Moore's being given a two-dollar fine for a minor traffic violation. Moore insisted he was not guilty and refused to pay it. He got a lawyer, who advised him to pay the two dollars and drop the matter. Moore refused and insisted on carrying the case through the courts, working his way up the judicial ladder.

In each court the guilty sentence was upheld and after each new hearing the lawyer, growing increasingly distraught, recommended that he pay the two dollars. But Moore was stubborn. Finally the case reached the Supreme Court, after Moore had spent half a lifetime in jail. A final adverse decision was handed down. The lawyer still pleaded, with tears in his eyes, that Moore pay the two dollars and go back to freedom. But Moore held out.

The final scene was of Moore stepping toward the electric chair, with the lawyer still begging him to pay the two dollars. A puff of smoke and a final sad "If he had only paid the two dollars!" brought the curtain down.

Should we tell Milton Mayer he ought to pay the two dollars? On a purely practical basis, I would say yes. Mayer is being a nuisance and the plan he suggests to take care of people like himself is a bother. But still these matters are not measured this way. People need symbols. The separate account is important to Mayer. Its existence would be a recognition of his existence as a pacifist interested in the welfare of his country.

It would be purely a gesture but the kind of gesture appropriate in a nation where the character, the nonconformist, the pest, is deemed not only a bother but in his own way a boon. Mayer, after all, may be one of America's ten just men, and for them the city will be saved.

JOHN COGLEY.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Community of Suffering

CLAIRE HUCHET BISHOP

TO THOSE of us whose father and mother died of old age and who have enjoyed good health throughout the major part of our own lives, physical suffering in others keeps knocking at the door of our mind and heart, over and over again. As we grow older, it becomes more and more evident to us that, no matter what we can do to alleviate physical suffering, we shall forever remain outside of it. And we may well come to a point where it seems blasphemous to thank God for *our* health, and thus our morning petition can only be: Lord, give me understanding.

Dorothy Day in this country and Abbé Pierre in France have said and proved that you have to be one of the poor in order to help the poor. By the same token, perhaps, you have to experience sickness in your own body in order to minister to the sick, not necessarily with medical skill, but with real humanity. Then, and then only, can communication and exchange be effective and the help more than a mere handing down of services, no matter how letter-perfect and well intentioned. However, it is evident that for practical reasons it is impossible for the sick to look after the sick on a large scale. Even in a small group, would this be advisable? Would not the members tend to develop a morbid interest in each other's respective ailments and thereby generate an atmosphere conducive to even poorer health? Such conclusions are logical enough, but they do not hold when it comes to the little known Congregation of the Sisters of Jesus Crucified, which is just over twenty-five years old.

The name of the Congregation in itself is apt to make one expect either a group of women unwholesomely obsessed by physical suffering or a traditional order of nuns devoting their lives to the sufferings of other people. So it comes as a shock to realize that the name means exactly what it says. These religious are sisters of Jesus in that they are themselves crucified daily in their own bodies; all the Sisters of the Congregation are sick, and they minister to each other without help from healthy people other than physicians and surgeons.

Such a religious community has never existed before. There were always women who, wishing to consecrate themselves to religious life, found it impossible to do so because they were ill, invalid or crippled. Indeed, the general rule of acceptance into a religious community is, as it should be, sound health. Therefore, it is an unforgettable experience to kneel in the convent chapel of the Mother House of the Sisters of Jesus Crucified at Brou in France, and see the young Sisters filing in for the Divine Office with canes, in wheel chairs, with unseeing eyes, or with limbs encased in braces or being carried on a litter. However, no matter how deeply disconcerting this is, still more disturbing is the atmosphere of calm joy which radiates from their presence. It is so real that not only pity, but even curiosity soon vanish. The unessential falls away, and there is nothing left for one to do but to listen inwardly to these women who have touched rock bottom, who touch it every day, and who, in the midst of their immense physical weakness, inadequacy and defeat, have chosen, as they themselves express it, "to show forth the glory of the Cross."

IT ALL started in 1930 when a young French girl of Polish descent, with three other girls, consecrated herself in the Sacré Coeur of Montmartre to the creation of a religious order which would enable sick and handicapped persons to fulfill their religious vocation. There were difficulties of all sorts in that unheard-of project, but eventually the path became smooth and, in 1933, the young girl became the Reverend Mother of the Sisters of Jesus Crucified and received the vows of the first of her daughters.

The rule is that of St. Benedict, "Ora et Labora ut Regnet," and the Sisters really follow it. This is not a sanatorium with a chapel; this is authentic monastic life. Seven times a day the Sisters chant the Divine Office; daily they participate in a dialogue Mass, recite the Rosary and meditate. They all work (some of them for as short a time as fifteen minutes a day) and all participate in running the community and in providing for it. The Sisters do secretarial work, tutor, operate dispensaries, print in Braille, bind books, and raise fruit, vegetables and flowers. The housework and cooking have also to be done, since there are no lay-sisters. Not least of their duties, the Sisters take care of and help each other: the paralyzed can dictate to the blind, the deaf can help the paralyzed and the blind can perform, for the bedridden, the kind of services which are so hard to accept from a seeing person.

Mrs. Bishop, a frequent contributor to The Commonweal, recently edited the anthology *Happy Christmas!*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Whatever the Sisters do, they are not to speak about their ailments to each other. Neither are they to make plans for their own health; they do not even pray for a cure, whether it be their own or that of other Sisters. They submit to the decision of their Superior in the consultation of a physician, surgical operations or routine treatment. It does not mean that scant consideration is given to their health by the Congregation. Far from it. A great deal of money is spent yearly for medical treatments, surgery and orthopedic apparatus. But the burden of thinking about their health is lifted out of the concern of the Sisters. Of course, the suffering or the handicap remains, but the Sister is prevented from being self-centered and from falling into the morbid habit of cherishing her suffering as so many people do, consciously or unconsciously. The Sisters do not "own" their suffering; they are as ready to see it go today or tomorrow as they are to live with it until the end. "For better or worse," the Sisters' motto is always *Amen, Alleluia.*

It is obvious that, from the psychological point of view, this spirit of true detachment, a life of companionship, balanced diet of work and rest, and a good measure of silence and music are bound to result in an improved outlook on life which, in turn, is also often beneficial to the Sister's physical condition. Indeed, since the founding of the community, physical amelioration and not deterioration has been the common experience. In the eyes of an outsider, this alone might justify the existence of the community—giving its members a certain amount of mental equilibrium and happiness through a wise organization and through the emotional outlet provided by the religious incentive. In other words, to a psychologist the whole thing might appear as a successful therapy for hopeless cases, the religious aspect being one of the ingredients which seem to give the best results, though of course it might be nothing else but a necessary illusion.

That this is to a certain extent a successful therapy, that the religious commitment helps to make the most of a bad situation, is undoubtedly true. But this is a result and not an aim, and therein lies the essential difference between the Congregation and what might take place in an up-to-date center for sick or disabled people. The initial purpose of the Congregation is to recognize the redeeming value of suffering. Not in the sense that suffering is good in itself, or that it is inflicted as punishment by God, or is something to enhance by unwholesome religious sentimentality. Rather, suffering is seen as a possible channel through which humanity may join in and continue the Redemption.

Such an attitude places the Sisters at the core of the question of human destiny. If the whole cosmos, including man, is eventually to disappear aimlessly and senselessly through entropism of energy, then suffering is nothing but an abominable woe; in the last analysis, nothing makes sense and nothing matters one way or the other. However, it was Einstein who reminded us that "the man who regards his own life and that of his fellow creatures as meaningless is not merely unfortunate but almost disqualified for life." Long ago Israel taught mankind a theology of history whereby history becomes meaningful because it has a direction. The Sisters of Jesus Crucified have come together under this sign of a direction in the history of mankind. Pain ceases to be futile and its redemptive value is fully accepted by them. The redemptive value is not for them alone, either individually or as a group; it is for all mankind.

IN 1955, the year of the Congregation's silver jubilee, the first American House was opened, Regina Mundi at Devon, Pennsylvania. From the start, Quakers, Jews, and Protestants as well as Catholics encouraged the Mother Superior. Suffering members of different races and countries formed the nucleus of the young American congregation: Irish, Japanese, colored and white Americans, French. Owing to favorable circumstances and to the generosity of friends and neighbors, Regina Mundi already enjoys a degree of comfort still unknown in the French convents after twenty-five years of existence, yet it remains a place where suffering is accepted as a means for participating in the work of Redemption.

The age limit for entering the order is thirty. The mentally disturbed, and those with contagious diseases or diseases of neurotic origin are not accepted. At the present time there are paralytic, cardiac and rheumatic cases, as well as the tubercular, blind, and crippled. Physicians and surgeons volunteer their services, but orthopedic apparatus always constitutes a financial problem for the community, especially since the nuns, though coming from all walks of life, are, most of them, from modest backgrounds. They cannot be expected to do more than meet their daily needs—in itself a remarkable achievement; for the rest, they have to rely on the generosity of outsiders.

The originality of the young community, that which might be called its spectacular aspect, is not, however, what makes it so fitted to our present time. In our day, physical suffering holds a place different from that which it had during the last twenty centuries. On one hand, there is a reversal to the pagan practice of wholesale murder through the bombings of civilians, through systematic race extermination and concentration camps. The suffering inflicted by man on man during the last twenty years has gone so far that most people want to forget it. On the other hand, in the field of individual suffering, there is a tremendous effort for alleviating it and preventing its causes through advancement in medical science. The latter would be all

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to the good if it were placed within the perspective of human destiny. As it stands, this is rarely done; people run frantically from physician to physician; nothing but the latest fad in drug or surgery can satisfy them for the time being. At the other extreme are the people who rely for healing entirely on dubious psychological and mental treatments.

At the bottom of all this confusion lies the lack of a proper approach to suffering which can neither be submitting abjectly to it through a devious masochism too often labeled Christianity, nor fighting it blindly right and left, nor refusing to acknowledge it. The "stiff upper lip," the American popular version of pagan stoicism, as commendable as it may appear, also fails to encompass the meaning of human destiny. Stoicism takes care at worst of the pride, at best the sense of self-dignity of the sufferer, who cannot bear to lower himself in his own eyes. How different Jesus's encounter with physical suffering. His acquiescence included, in the fulness of His humanity, despair and weakness: "Eli, Eli lamma sabacthani" (Mat. 27:46), while at the same time carrying the fulness of the redeeming power of suffering. All suffering is the continuation of the Passion, in time, in space, at one with mankind's universal pain past, present and future, "literally of the same eternity," said Péguy, echoing Pascal's "Jesus Christ in agony until the end of the world."

In the darkness which engulfs so many of our present days, the new Congregation of sick people who have come to an understanding of the redemptive value of suffering and who daily proclaim its reality, brings hope, not only to the ill, but also to the healthy of all mankind.

THE SCREEN

BUILDING A HOUSE FOR LAST WINTER

ON SELECTING my Ten Best List from the films of 1956, I was reminded of an Ethiopian proverb passed on to me by a friend who is teaching there. "You can't build a house for last winter." There's something backward-turn-backward about trying to choose the best from a past year's endeavors, but at the same time such a list is worth making. It may encourage producers to do better next year. It gives the reviewer an opportunity to be as arbitrary and personal as he likes. And it gives his readers a chance to compare his taste with theirs. So without further ado, I tap these ten—not necessarily in order of preference.

La Strada—because in telling a story of three people on the road of life, Italian Director-writer Frederico Fellini imbued it with charity, successfully mixed poetry and realism and got outstanding performances from Anthony Quinn, Giulietta Masina and Richard Basehart.

Around the World in 80 Days—because it was the slickest all-around entertainment of the year, a triumph for Producer Michael Todd who made Jules Verne's satire even funnier, showed how the Todd-AO Process can be used to increase a film's beauty and excitement, and successfully maneuvered moviedom's starriest cast perfectly led by David Niven and Cantinflas.

Giant—because in guiding Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean through the intricacies of Edna Ferber's story, Producer-director George Stevens admirably captured the bigness and littleness of Texans and made a strong plea for tolerance.

Marcelino—because this charming Spanish film, about a little boy raised in a monastery, presented religious themes, including the joy and meaning of life, with a sincerity seldom attained in movies.

Lust for Life—because, although it failed to explain Van Gogh, it was certainly one of the best films about an artist ever made and was enhanced by John Houseman's first-rate production with beautiful sets and reproductions of the artist's work and a fine cast headed by Kirk Douglas and Anthony Quinn.

Richard III—because of Laurence Olivier's magnificent performance in the title role, production and direction of a top-notch cast in a stimulating film that was both good cinema and good Shakespeare.

War and Peace—because, in spite of making Tolstoy's story seem to be about a lot of superficial people, it succeeded in conveying the bigness of the author's themes, especially in the battle scenes which are among movies' best.

The King and I—for its unforgettably beautiful costumes and sets photographed in DeLuxe Color and CinemaScope 55 and for its pleasant retelling of the Rodgers-Hammerstein musical, nicely acted and sung by a cast headed by Deborah Kerr and Yul Brynner.

Moby Dick—for the praiseworthy though not entirely successful attempt to capture Herman Melville's complicated, metaphysical novel on the screen.

Somebody Up There Likes Me—because, although it muffed its religious themes in telling the story of Rocky Graziano, it presented the growth of a man from a juvenile delinquent with convincing realism; and under Robert Wise's direction, the good cast headed by Paul Newman gave outstanding portrayals.

So stand the ten—but actually with a little shifting several other films could have made the list, good films that deserve more than a nod, like: "The Man Who Never Was," "Patterns," "Come Next Spring," "The Catered Affair," "The Last Ten Days," "Friendly Persuasion" and "Wee Geordie." Everyone will have his own favorites for the year—and it wasn't a bad year.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Rediscovery of Religious Poetry

HORACE GREGORY

FEW OF US living in the present decade of the mid-century would claim we are passing through an age of all-pervading religious faith. Yet it can be said, with more assurance than many dared to assume thirty years ago, that Western culture, the culture of English-speaking peoples, is dependent upon knowing that we live within a Christian world.

During the past two centuries, since "the age of enlightenment" at least, people have sought out several substitutes for religion, the worst of these being cults of mystical salvation—pits for wealthy widows, effeminate men, and gullible adolescents—which after World War I took on elaborate titles such as "The Harmonious Development of Man." Other substitutes were biological science, social science, cult worship of Freud, Marx, of Communism, and of National Socialism as it was practiced in Germany and Italy. Behind (and in numerous cases after) these latter-day conversions were violent periods of disillusionment. After 1939 many substitutes for religious emotion and perception failed: the results (if one were still alive) were like the after-effects of drinking "restored" denatured alcohol.

During the present decade the age has become disillusioned with the results of disillusionment. Images of strange gods have become true monsters, and the human fall from grace has lacked tragic significance. The twentieth century's errors and mistakes are all too clearly the marks of naiveté and folly.

In our day (which is so unlike the world as it was known before 1914) to speak of religious emotions and beliefs, presupposes a dark background of economic depressions and world wars. All questions related to poetry and religion are today less academic than they seemed to be at the end of the nineteenth century. In 1900 George Santayana could approach those relationships with an air of calmness as well as a certain historical detachment: he explained with admirable clarity religious elements in the so-called Homeric Hymns, and then went on to tell how and why Platonism and Neo-Platonism became increasingly abstract ideals of goodness that lost their hold upon the imagination of the people. With this loss, both poetry and religion evaporated into the values of philosophic truths, unworldly enough perhaps, but lacking human passion and religious law. The dissolution of Paganism had taken place and the world waited on a new order of religious or divine inspiration, a sense of being that would re-establish an ancient trinity between man and men and man and God. The answers came in the books of the Old and New Testaments; the passion was re-enacted in the life of Christ, and behind it the authority, the *poetry* of the Hebrew Godhead, its prophets and kings. . . . "But what overcame the world," wrote Santayana, "was what Saint Paul said he would always preach: Christ and him crucified."

In 1900 the Christian world looked back across the span of the nineteenth century, a century which as Santayana saw it had been bitterly torn by religious doubts and schisms, but the kind of horrors that have been the familiars of human experience today had scarcely arrived. It took a nineteenth-century writer of evangelical temper—Rudyard Kipling—in his old age, in 1919, to express the terror, the discontent, of the thirty years that followed the writing of these lines:

> As it will be in the future, it was at the birth of Man—
> There are only four things certain since Social Progress began:—
> That the Dog returns to his Vomit and the Sow returns to her Mire,
> And the burnt Fool's bandaged finger goes wabbling back to the Fire;
> And that after this is accomplished, and the brave new world begins
> When all men are paid for existing and no man must pay for his sins,
> As surely as Water will wet us, as surely as Fire will burn,
> The Gods of the Copybook Headings with terror and slaughter return!

This was verse in the furious manner of what George Orwell called Kipling's "good-bad poetry"; but the angry clear-eyed British Colonial East Indian who in his manner was a nearly Hebraic prophet had his say in language that no one could misunderstand. Something like biblical fury had been translated into verse which converted the phrase "brave new world" into a memorable irony, and in which the present century has learned its discontents.

Mr. Gregory is himself a well-known poet. This article is adapted from his introduction to *The Mentor Book of Religious Verse*, edited by Horace Gregory and Marya Zaturenska, to be published by the New American Library of World Literature on Jan. 22. ©1956 by Horace Gregory and Marya Zaturenska.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WITH THIS as prelude we come to a rediscovery of religious verse in the present mid-century, a decade in which the distance between poetry and religion seems much shorter. At no time was that distance very great—for in all literatures the sources of poetry are close to the sources of divine inspiration, and we need not repeat the well-known anthropological-historical proofs of that relationship. Yet—and not so long ago—it was unfashionable to admit that religious feeling and the writing of poetry had valid associations. It was then more appropriate for a poet to be aware of his biological origins than to confess to a belief in God. The reasons for this peculiar turn of fashion were obvious. In England slightly past the middle years of the nineteenth century the best minds of the age felt the recession of established faith, and the realization of that feeling came in these famous lines from Matthew Arnold's "Dover Beach":

The Sea of Faith
Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
But now I only hear
Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
Retreating, to the breath
Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
And naked shingles of the world.

Nor was it easy in the two decades after the writing of "Dover Beach" for a Gerard Manley Hopkins to assert a reawakening of faith: to the profoundly aware and seriously minded poets of the age the melancholy lines of "Dover Beach" reverberated and returned as echoes heard within the ear. In America the undertones of Arnold's warning were less immediately heard. Our foundations in Puritan convictions were less easily shaken—and our Protestant sects with their evangelical-Wesleyan variations continued to flourish side by side and in company with the most blatant forms of commercial optimism. In 1894 Santayana wrote:

My heart rebels against my generation,
That talks of freedom and is slave to riches,
And, toiling 'neath each day's ignoble burden,
Boasts of the morrow.

His was a critical perception, that with Henry Adams' fear of the encroaching powers of Boston's State Street warned that all liberal thinking, including religious faith, would be submerged in mindless materialism. Yet Santayana's remarks were expressions of social and political discontent rather than religious verse. The uneasy intellectuals of the age joined forces with the writers of realistic fiction: Utopian socialism was offered as an end in view; and writers of mystical and poetic insight died in obscurity, Emily Dickinson in 1886, Herman Melville in 1891.

In America the critics of materialism were quasi-materialists themselves; they distrusted the unctuous appearances of men in clerical clothing as well as the charlatans of Protestant faith, the ignorant preachers who with anti-intellectual fervor shouted, "Thou shalt not think!" The stage had been set for American caricatures of religious authority in both biography and fiction: the lives of Henry Ward Beecher and Brigham Young, the intractable, gloomy realism of Harold Frederic's *The Damnation of Theron Ware,* which in the following two generations became transformed into the satires, Sinclair Lewis's *Elmer Gantry* and Erskine Caldwell's *Journeyman.*

The social conscience had become the literal substitute for religious feeling. It had become all too easy to regard a priest or a minister of God as a victim of sexual aberration; and by 1930 it took moral as well as intellectual courage to stand up in opposition to prevailing critical attacks upon the authority of established churches.

IN THE present century the first serious attention given to the reading of religious verse came with the rediscovery of the poems of John Donne. As T. S. Eliot remembers that date in America, the scene was a classroom in freshman English at Harvard, the lecturer was Professor Briggs, and the time was 1906.

A generation earlier in London, John Churton Collins, the critic and lecturer; A. C. Swinburne, and D. G. Rossetti had shared the enthusiasm of their mutual discovery of Donne. Swinburne and Rossetti were particularly vocal, for they had made two previous and important discoveries: the poems of William Blake and Whitman's *Leaves of Grass.* Donne added a third star to their firmament. Not long after their fervent approval, talk and speculation concerning Donne crossed the Atlantic and then caught the attention of lecturers in American universities.

In 1912 Professor Herbert J. C. Grierson's definitive edition of *The Poems of John Donne* gave the readings of John Donne's poems in college classrooms additional authority. Donne was then reread and admired as a metaphysical poet; less stress was placed upon the religious character of his "Holy Sonnets" than on the wit and tension of his earlier poems. Those who grew shy in the presence of religious sentiment could safely advance an interest in metaphysics. Ten years later the effort to be "metaphysical," to seek out a quasi-scientific cause for being, came into high fashion—provided one was not committed to a belief in God. The term was so attractive that groups of poets decided that all their friends wrote metaphysical poems, and if their poems were not precisely metaphysical and did not resemble in the least Donne's "Holy Sonnets," they could be read as "ontological" poems, an even stricter and more scientific term to express a search for the nature of reality. The term "metaphysical" could be extended to include the entire works of Shakespeare,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Gray's "Elegy in a Country Churchyard," the poems of Emily Dickinson, and the writings of any living poet who was careful enough to use key words such as "brain," "bone," or "blood."

The next step toward a rediscovery of religious verse in English came with the publication in 1918 of *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins,* a posthumous volume (Hopkins had died in 1889) edited by the British poet laureate, Robert Bridges. Hopkins' technical innovations were as startling as any contributions made to "the new poetry" of the twentieth century. The publication of his book was proof to a younger generation of poets in the United States as well as in England that religious verse need not be sanctimonious or dull. The publication of his book, coming as it did after a revival of interest in the poetry of John Donne, reilluminated the religious elements discovered in Donne's "Holy Sonnets," and slowly the fashionable prejudice against religious verse began to decline. The way was still difficult and by no means clear: elements of religious emotion in the poetry of T. S. Eliot (when understood at all) were openly resented; and as recently as 1933 the essential religious quality that gave meaning to the poems of Hart Crane was frequently misread. Of the older poets in America, only Edwin Arlington Robinson sustained the austerities, the dignity, the wit, the difficult, often misread strictness of "the old tradition"—Puritan sharpness and restraint grown aristocratic—and Robinson was best known and admired for his latter-day Arthurian romances, which are written in blank verse.

Certainly a renewed appreciation of religious verse in English was as difficult of accomplishment in the twentieth century as the finding of deeply inspired religious poems. It was not until the latter 1930's that a public as well as critical response in that direction could be discerned. It began to make itself known with the production of T. S. Eliot's play in verse, *Murder in the Cathedral,* in New York and London theaters—and from that day to the present, a refreshed spirit, even through the disasters of a second world war, has attended the reading of religious verse. At the very least, we can say that the 1950's have permitted a rediscovery and renewed appreciation of religious literature.

BOOKS

Need for Courage, Knowledge and Humility

GO IN BEAUTY. By William Eastlake. Harper and Brothers. $3.50.

By THOMAS F. CURLEY

AFTER READING Mr. Eastlake's book once, one is impressed and puzzled; after reading it a second time, one is still impressed but less puzzled. I think this is an important first novel. The author has written distinguished short stories; he has a definite style; and if he is not yet at home with the novel, he is perfectly at ease with each chapter. Instead of hanging out a list of complimentary adjectives, let's say that he is a writer worthy of close reading.

On the surface this is a simple, well-told story. Alexander Bowman runs off with his youngest brother's wife. She is a beautiful girl, rich and expensively educated, who has studied how to paint under Lhote. Her name is Perrette. She is a clever talker and she drinks a lot. She is the only woman in the book who might have been important; she is not. After leaving home and brother with Perrette, Alexander Bowman writes a number of good and successful novels. But he is tormented, his talent dries up and he comes back to old Mexico, as near to home as he dares to go, where he dies drunk, the victim of another drunkard's machete. His body is taken home to New Mexico where he is buried atop a mesa. As his brother completes the burial, one of the Indians, among whom both brothers grew up, shouts to the dead man: "Go in beauty."

The only flaw I can see in the surface movement of the story is the absence of a middle. There is a good beginning and a suitable end, but once Alexander has left with Perrette there is no action, only suffering, until Alexander is about to be killed. There is no action because the incidents which make up the middle chapters of the book are merely incidental and serve primarily to record the sufferings of the two brothers: George, who cannot bring himself to forgive his brother; and Alexander, who cannot do the hard and simple thing of going home and asking his brother to forgive him.

It is on second reading that Mr. Eastlake's story elicts a deeper interest. One becomes less concerned with Alexander's disintegration as the significance of his brother's resentment emerges. Towards the end of the book Alexander, and the reader, learn the truth of an incident that occurred when both brothers were youths. Heretofore, Alexander had thought merely that George had rescued him from a deserted mine shaft. The truth is that George had seen him fall into the mine shaft, had not rescued him for three days and did so then only when he saw that one of the Indians was about to discover Alexander. With this in mind the scenes immediately preceding Alexander's elopement with Perrette become credible and clear in their meaning: at first it seems that George is extremely stupid not to know that his wife is about to leave him; at second glance it is obvious that he is forcing Perette on Alexander, that he wants to be betrayed by brother

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and wife. Why? In order to justify his ingrained hatred. Mr. Eastlake never says this and none of his characters ever think it, but I cannot interpret the scenes in any other way.

Once the brothers part, the suffering ensues. Alexander attains his irrelevant fame and George, secure in his stupor, waits for what must come: Alexander's death. George's struggle to overcome his resentment is never successful. By the time he writes the letter, bidding his brother to come home, Alexander is acting the last chapter of his life and although George does not know this, he never mails the letter which is still in his hand when Alexander is lowered to his grave. The Indian medicine man, Paracelsus, takes the letter from George and drops it into the grave.

The action is powerful; the conception is serious; and the prose is lean and clear. The one flaw, to my mind, is that George never fully recognizes the implacability and depth of his hatred, and he can receive his brother's body and bury it with his characteristic stupor instead of the terror which a recognition of his motives would require. "Things keep getting in the way," Quicker-Than-You, one of the Indians, explained. This is a nice understatement, for it was not things but George himself who kept getting in the way. And yet *things* is a very nice word, for both Bowmans resemble things insofar as they are people to whom things happen, victims of the weather of their inarticulate compulsions. Both men, indeed, have strong wills and they both seek to become persons, to exist as human beings. They both fail, not through any lack of nerve but because of an inability to articulate. Freedom is not to be had by courage alone; knowledge is needed and knowledge cannot be had without a certain humility before the object to be known. For generations the Bowman family had cut itself off from the "violent pretense of reality." The sad beauty of Mr. Eastlake's tale is that reality, whether of the world or of the self, may be ignored or defied, but never thwarted.

True Comic Insight into Life

MUCH ADO ABOUT ME. By Fred Allen. Atlantic—Little, Brown. $5.

By FRANK GETLEIN

HERE FRED Allen completes the story begun in *Treadmill to Oblivion*. The former book dealt with his years in bigtime radio and might be inadequately summed up as a study of the artist enmeshed with big business. The present book recounts his early life and more conventionally hard times. It was a labor of love, and love for the departed way of life shines through every chapter in the book. It is, happily, a love with quite clear vision. The main focus of the book is the struggles of a vaudeville performer to eat the next meal and get a booking somewhere, somehow, sometime.

There is a deeply Irish tone to the book, not the tone of Frank O'Connor, but the tone of everybody's comic Irish uncle. The feel of the book is very much the feel of the best of Allen's radio material and I think in that resemblance to the family comedian is probably the key to what made Allen funny.

The comic uncle of the New England Irish family had a special brand of humor. Quite possibly it developed out of the general situation of the Irish in New England in the last century. At any rate, at its heart was a fundamental resignation to the way of the world. It might be said that the Irish uncle, usually widowed or unmarried, often more or less a failure at money-making, took revenge in his humor against the world he had given up battling. Actually, the attitude was often more profound than that, and it is here.

What it is, at its best, is a deep conviction of the vanity of human achievement. The humor emerges, usually, not in the constructed comic situation and its development, but in the act of telling the commonplace, everyday event. All events, to the Irish uncle, are mishaps of great or less degree, and he makes this clear as he tells the family of his afternoon's experience on the streetcar. If an endeavor has failed, this was to be expected and the failure is softened in the telling; the implication is that things could hardly have turned out otherwise. If success has blessed some enterprise, the telling records the proper astonishment to such an outcome, and it also ends on a slightly mocking note.

Described thus, the whole process sounds anything but funny. The uncle sounds like a gloomy boarder to have in the house, yet it was he who kept the whole thing going, psychologically. He provided a detachment essential to life. He perceived and let others perceive the laughter in the human comedy.

Basically that is the method of the book. One could guess, pretty accurately, the ups and downs of a vaudeville performer in the dying days of the form. Allen's troubles and triumphs were not spectacularly different from those of many others. But he tells the story in the style of the Irish uncle and it's a joy to read.

The book opens with Allen's childhood in Boston. He grew up in a familiar Irish-American situation, his mother having died, his father more or less a stranger, an aunt having taken the boy to her heart and home. This world is at once appalling and rather endearing.

After a few passes at jobs and schooling, Allen moved into theatrical work and the rest of the book describes the course of a moderately successful vaudevillian.

One of the good things about Allen was the seriousness with which he took his work. This is reflected in the book in a continuing series of descriptions and analyses of the various routines he developed. This is all done without pretension and with great critical competence, and it is all expressed in the tone of the Irish uncle who expects most things to collapse.

The book was nearly completed when Allen died on St. Patrick's day, last year. It has been published as he left it, but the tale had only a short way to go to reach the beginning of his radio achievement.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Provocative, Rewarding Study

THE SPIRIT OF TRAGEDY. By Herbert J. Muller. Knopf. $5.

By MICHAEL HARRINGTON

WHEN a modern speaks of tragedy, it is usually to deny that the form is possible to us. The Greeks and the Elizabethans seem so terribly distant and our own age one of prose. This thought has been with us since the middle of the nineteenth century when the Hegelians, confronted with their own affirmation of the "end of history," argued that tragedy was over as well. In our day, the same conclusion is usually based on a formalistic theory of the theatre, often as not Aristotelian in inspiration.

It is the greatest merit of Herbert Muller's new study that it breaks with this conception. Here, tragedy is not defined in terms of formal characteristics (the great man, the fall, the purgation), but rather as a more essential spirit which can take many forms. For Muller, tragedy is both pessimistic and humanistic, and he quotes with approval Kenneth Burke's definition of Purpose (the hero's purpose is defeated), Passion (the anguish of the action) and Perception (the knowledge that results, the coming to terms with fate). Given such an approach, valuable insights into modern tragedy, say the work of an Ibsen or a Chekov, are made possible.

A similar critique of formalist theories of tragedy was made by Suzanne Langer in her *Feeling and Form*, and her definition of tragedy and comedy is worth quoting at length because it is more concise than Mr. Muller's, though substantially in agreement with his: "comedy is essentially contingent, episodic, and ethnic; it expresses the continuous balance of sheer vitality that belongs to society and is exemplified briefly in each individual; tragedy is a fulfillment, and its form therefore is closed, final and passional. Tragedy is a mature art form, that has not arisen in all parts of the world, not even in all great civilization. Its conception requires a sense of individuality which some religions and some cultures—even high cultures—do not generate."

Such a conception of tragedy is much richer than the usual formal theories. In Mr. Muller's book, this is clear for anyone to see in terms of practical consequences. The range of material covered, the basis of judgment, is wider and deeper than in the ordinary discussion of tragedy as an art form. Muller is, because of his view, much more able to deal with the moderns, and his insights into the baffling works of the French eighteenth century are very much worth while. This, I think, is a direct consequence of his having liberated himself from the narrow approach in which a play is tragic if it has an "unhappy" ending, comic if all turns out well.

At the same time, Muller is something of an iconoclast, as readers of his *Uses of the Past* will remember. This gives his work an exciting pace, but it also leads to some lamentable—and dogmatic—

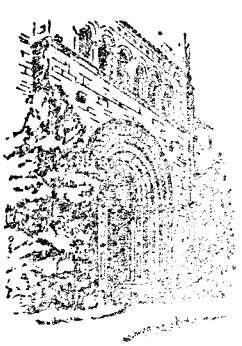
CHESTNUT HILL COLLEGE

Chestnut Hill
Pennsylvania

Conducted by the Sisters of St. Joseph

Approved by the Association of American Universities.

For further information write to the Registrar.



Prospective students should make early application

To bring aid to refugees as they cross the Hungarian border and in Austrian emergency camps

Send your donations to

Catholic Relief Services
National Catholic Welfare Conference
Empire State Bldg., New York 1, N.Y.

TWO NEW AQUINAS PAPERS

No. 27
Wittgenstein and the Cult of Language
D. J. B. Hawkins, D.D., Ph.D.
35 cents

No. 28
Rosmini on Human Rights
C. J. Emery, Inst.Ch., M.A.
35 cents

Just Published

No. 25. THE MIND IN LOVE by Kenelm Foster, O.P. .. .. 35¢

No. 26. THE CONTAINED ECONOMY by W. Stark, M.A. .. .. 35¢

Payment may be made by International Money Order or by a check drawn on an American Bank.

BLACKFRIARS PUBLICATIONS
34 BLOOMSBURY STREET, LONDON W.C.1

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

judgments. We are told that the spacious, cosmic imagery of Antony and Cleopatra is all to the good, but that this play "gives no sense of inexplicable evil." One thinks of the scene in which Cleopatra receives the asp ("I wish you joy of the worm") and wonders. Or there is the statement that Henry V is "hardly an interesting character, or even a real individual," a statement which could only be made if that play is read hurriedly (passing over the soliloquy on "ceremony") and is torn out of the context of the two Henry IV's, which are integral to it.

But this criticism is, in a sense, minor, a matter of random estimations made by Professor Muller. More serious, I think, is his tendency to substitute tragedy for religion, his reversion to the point of view of Matthew Arnold. Mr. Muller is an aggressive rationalist, a modern man to whom religion is irrelevant. Such a point of view is, of course, his privilege, but when it begins to influence his conception of tragedy, it becomes a matter for critical concern. In the last analysis, Mr. Muller's tragic spirit becomes the servant of his own particular philosophy; it is something which will fill in the void left by the vanishing of religious belief.

What this does is to grant to art an autonomy which it does not possess. One cannot argue that a culture devalues the dignity of man and then expect that one part of that culture, in this case tragedy, will stand out against the times and become a means of humanizing an inhuman reality. As Mrs. Langer pointed out, tragedy does not exist in isolation; its appearance in certain cultures and its absence in others would seem to stand in some relation to their total reality, including their religious attitudes. That Mr. Muller would make the error of expecting a part to play a role which the whole is incapable of is surprising, since most of his book is pervaded by a sense of history, by an understanding of the interrelationships of culture and art forms. As it is, his notion can only lead to a curiously aristocratic conception of the role of tragedy in which the art form is divorced from the society and the culture.

This point of view is, to my mind, a major error, yet it does not vitiate the worth of this book, nor is it the main point which Mr. Muller argues. Leaving aside his snap-judgments and his Arnoldian view of the role of art, *The Spirit of Tragedy* is an extremely valuable book. Mr. Muller has broken with the narrow, formalistic theories of tragedy and the result is a treatment of considerable richness and depth.

Modern Warriors

A RIDE TO PANMUNJOM. By Duane Thorin. Regnery. $4.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

THIS SEMI-FACTUAL, episodic recording of war prisoners' experiences betrays some ghostly resemblance to a novel, but the fact that the book has nothing to say as a novel can not be altered. On the other hand, it could occasion prolonged comment by the urgency of issues it highlights, if Mr. Thorin had not pulled out all the stops through the dogmatic propounding of his opinions.

Duane Thorin was a Korean War helicopter pilot credited with rescuing many fellow-Americans behind Communist lines before he too was captured; having been held in North Korea from early 1952 until August, 1953, his accounts of military imprisonment under the Chinese Communists can hardly be said to lack authenticity. They are ponderously transmitted by Sergeant Wolfe, deep in cogitation on his way back to freedom with a truckful of co-repatriates. The sergeant is a stolid mouthpiece, but we get no total impression of any of the GI's, each more abecedarian than the last, whose internment trials and errors he reviews. It is a register of the author's cold grasp of Communist psychology that the captors are animated more nearly to life size. That the brainwash is a *nice* brutality, consisting of the subtlest mental-physical tortures, is demonstrated with thorough success. Missed is the larger goal, i.e., the depiction of how individual combatants at bay took up the gauntlet.

The serenely basic passions of the classic war hero, which offered him reasons beyond dispute for becoming engaged—yet which gave margin for the acceptance of war's final mystery—and involved causes that encouraged personal identification, no longer exist. Modern war engages men impersonally and implicitly against their will; the behemoth of the omni-state promotes anonymity, but by that very token inspires self-consciousness and self-pity. Thus, war has increasingly to be explained away. There can be crisis but not much pathos in being uninformed; even as there is little glory in being well-informed. The highest value the fictionalized World War II GI recognizes in his fight is our high living standard. Is this a creative value? And what of dying standards? Classic heroes would not have defied death for a status quo; but of course they usually envisaged themselves as conquerors, as modern man can not.

The absence of an acceptable conveyance for the ride to Panmunjom results in an oppressively earnest question-answer session. The primitive compounds are a hell of minor miseries building to major monotony, which is reconstructed so faithfully that its benumbing effects on the prisoners are vicariously shared by the hardiest reader. But it is a novelist's business to bring variety and range to bear even on monotony. Thorin presents various types of men but nowhere the multiform of an individual. This omission or suppression supplies the wedge for the author's value judgments, always strenuously corresponding with a military casuistry upon every prisoner whose case is treated. It is also a convenience for direct polemic, wherein the author worries the bones of controversy but ends endorsing the Great American Cliché.

The coddlers of our youth are liberally scolded, in particular the doting Moms and crusading Congressmen out to make the Army safe for democracy. (It is, in fact, one of the inherent paradoxes of democracy that the last hierarchy surviv-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ing within it undisguised happens to be the only potent instrument for its ultimate salvation.) Mr. Thorin taxes the "softness" of American civilization for the germ warfare "confessions." He properly deplores the fact that our servicemen rarely march away shouldering a healthy, wholehearted understanding of their cause, much less of the enemy's; the men he writes about, regardless of echelon, have to learn the hard way, but few do. Even then the closest approximation of conviction is a bleary sort of improvised Christianity holding minimal promise of durability.

Everyone's County

NEVER TOO LATE. By Angela Thirkell. Knopf. $3.95

By DACHINE RAINER

DEAR ME! I feel as though I'm at this tea to which I'd rather wanted to be invited and now that I'm here Care nothing at all for the guests or the Scones and am actually most frightfully embarrassed at my misguided desire in the First place. I keep flitting from group to group Feeling like an imposter and Eavesdropping besides. The chatter is bright, trivial but Yes reflecting the weightier Aspects of England that I had mistakenly Dear me thought two wars and that Infernal labor Government had squashed. No no not Squash. Squash is a game still played by the gentry No I'm not at all certain quite How I think it is really Quite like what the Americans call ping Pong or is it cricket? That is *is* it cricket that is like ping Pong and Squash like something Entirely different?

Dear me Everyone's County but really I *must* engage Someone in conversation. I cannot seem to enter into Things. For one Thing I am not related to Anyone Else and Everyone Else here is; Related to everyone that is. I've never run into such a tribe of great aunts and fourth cousins who, although their clothes are subdued, their language is Mauve and who spend all their time Visiting. Actually I'm not even related by Service to the Lower classes That is not properly related because though I've been in service it's Never been to Aunt Leslie who was Lord Brickbat's grandmother before the present Young Aunt Leslie nor anyone over to the Tomfret Powers manor house. And for another Thing I cannot I simply cannot abide Lords who giggle. Incessantly too.

Ah Here you are dear Mrs. Morland! (my hostess, Mrs. M. in the book: Angela Thirkell in life) Tweedy and aging, flourishing her autograph pen A famous Lady Novelist. What can I say to her I've never read another of her forty-nine books and under the circumstances —these dreadfully Dull people Don't you know?—I consider myself well Out of it. If she'd only lose these samples of the aristocracy. We—she and I—are after all No not cousins I haven't a Cousin in all the British Empire Or what's left of it No we are Lady Novelists together though if I thought we had more than our Sex in common I would put something Perfectly toxic into my Tea and take Off.

Ah Dear Mrs. Morland as you were just saying You've got the most splendid secretary, and cheap, too, I'll wager, who does the Punctuation on your books. Do you find you Entrust her with anything Else Ahem . . . not the actual writing of course No no please don't giggle What I mean is a bit of the plotting No? no plotting. Ah! I wondered if you sometimes felt you could use a bit of a theme perhaps No? no Theme aha Well well Now I'm saying this as I shouldn't but I'd fire her in Any case No no the Punctuation is Splendid but Really anyone who Polishes silver with a Glass cloth!! Ah Yes One can't find Good servants nowadays its even difficult to locate a truly satisfactory novelist.

REVIEWERS

Thomas F. Curley is a frequent contributor to The Commonweal.

Frank Getlein is art critic for the Milwaukee *Journal*.

Michael Harrington writes for various American journals.

William Dunlea is a free-lance writer living in New York.

Dachine Rainer is a well-known novelist and poet.

Educational

NEW JERSEY

Caldwell College

Caldwell, New Jersey. A four year liberal arts college conducted by the Sisters of Saint Dominic. Accredited by the Middle States Association of Colleges and Secondary Schools. Liberal Arts, Sciences, Business, Teacher Training. Library Science, Music. Tuition $350, Board $550. Degrees: B.A., B.S., A.A. Catalogue: The Registrar, Caldwell, N. J.

Delbarton School

Morristown, New Jersey. An hour's drive from the George Washington Bridge or Holland Tunnel. A country day and boarding school for boys conducted by Benedictine Monks. Six forms, comprising the 7th and 8th grades and four years of college preparatory courses. Small classes. Thorough guidance department. Complete athletic program. Write for prospectus to the Headmaster.

Classified

★RATES, payable in advance: 16⅔c a word (6 words, $1). Centered lines $1 each. 12 words or 2 lines minimum. Discounts: 5% for 3 times, 10% for 7 times, 15% for 13 times.

IRISH BOOKS AND GIFTS

★ Books, Linens, Gifts. *Catalogs.*
IRISH INDUSTRIES DEPOT, INC.
870 Lexington Ave., (near 65th), New York

SPIRITUAL READING

★THINKER'S DIGEST, International Miniature Spiritual Reading Quarterly. *"Brilliant Experiment"*—London Editor. $2 yearly. Samples: 4 issues $1. Sent anywhere with gift card. Dallas, Pennsylvania.

PRINTED LABELS

★500 Gummed labels, printed 3 lines, $1. HERDMAN, 326 Broadway, Newark 4, N. J.

STATUES

★Every kind of religious statue and painting done to order. Reasonable.
ST. BENEDICT STUDIO
Westport, Conn.

CHRISTMAS CRIBS

★Hand carved wood and ivory cribs made by Catholic cooperative in India, from $10 to $50. For further information write Mrs. Ludlow Kravis, 8 Waterway, Manhasset, N.Y.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

If You Didn't Get The Commonweal for Christmas

. . . and don't now subscribe yourself, it may strike you as a good idea to give such a gift to yourself to begin 1957. The process of taking out a trial subscription is simple and inexpensive.

Each week The Commonweal will bring you literate articles on issues of the day by leading American and European writers; John Cogley's "Here and There"; frequent dispatches from Britain, France, Italy and other lands by such men as Michael P. Fogarty, Robert Barrat, and Gunnar D. Kumlien.

In addition you will receive literary articles and reviews of current fiction and non-fiction by an alert and forthright group of critics, week by week; The Stage by Richard Hayes; The Screen by Philip T. Hartung. If you take an interest in the arts, you will look forward especially to The Commonweal's coming succession of attractive book issues.

The two dollars you venture now in accepting the attached trial offer promises you a more than ample return—over four hundred pages of good reading. Send for a trial subscription early this New Year.

SPECIAL TRIAL OFFER
NOT FOR CURRENT RENEWALS

THE COMMONWEAL, 386 Fourth Ave., New York 16, N. Y.

Enclosed is $2.00. Please send the next 17 issues of The Commonweal to:

Name .....

Address .....

City .....

1/4/57

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED